

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1-4 and 18 and add new Claims 74-79.

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing cheese comprising:

(a) providing a protein concentrate having a calcium content between 100 mM/kg protein and 700 mM/kg protein,

(b) providing a flavour concentrate using at least one strain of organism,

~~(c) mixing the protein concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid if required,~~

[[(d)] (c) heating to form a coagulated cheese mass without holding for fermentation,

[[(e)] (d) adding the flavour concentrate before, during or after step [[(c)] (b).

2. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing cheese comprising:

(a) providing a protein concentrate having a calcium content between 100 mM/kg protein and 700 mM/kg protein,

(b) providing a flavour concentrate using at least one strain of organism,

~~(c) mixing the protein concentrate and flavour concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid if required,~~

[[(d)] (c) heating to form a coagulated cheese mass without holding for fermentation, and if required inactivating the flavour producing organisms,

[[(e)] (d) cooling the resulting coagulated cheese mass to form a cheese precursor with an exposed surface,

[[(f)] (c) applying viable organisms to the exposed surface,

[[(g)] (f) allowing the cheese to ripen.

3. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cheese comprising:

(a) providing a protein concentrate having a calcium content between 100 mM/kg protein and 700 mM/kg protein,

~~(b) optionally providing a flavour concentrate using at least one strain of organism,~~

~~(c) mixing the protein concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid if required,~~

[[(d)] (b) heating to form a coagulated cheese mass without holding for fermentation,

[[(e)]] (c) cooling the coagulated cheese mass and mixing in a flavour concentrate containing viable organisms to form a cheese precursor, and

~~— (f) — optionally dividing the cheese precursor into consumer portions,~~

[[(g)]] (d) allowing the cheese precursor ~~or the portions~~ to ripen.

4. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a cheese comprising:

(a) providing a protein concentrate having a calcium content between 100 mM/kg protein and 700 mM/kg protein,

(b) providing a flavour concentrate using at least one strain of organism,

~~(e) — mixing the protein concentrate and flavour concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid if required,~~

[[(d)]] (c) heating to form a coagulated cheese mass without holding for fermentation ~~fermentation~~, and if required inactivating the flavour producing organisms,

[[(e)]] (d) dividing the cheese mass into portions.

5. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the cheese or cheese precursor is divided into portions.

6. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the cheese is subjected to freezing.

7. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 6 wherein following the freezing step, the cheese is thawed and further ripening occurs.

8. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, further comprising applying viable organisms to the exposed surface, and allowing the cheese to ripen.

9. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the precursor cheese or the cheese is shredded or particulated.

10. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the protein concentrate is selected from a milk protein concentrate, a renneted milk or a reconstituted milk protein concentrate.

11. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the flavour concentrate comprises at least one edible mould.

12. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 11 wherein the mould organism is selected from the family of *Penicillium*, *Mucor*, *Cladosporium*, *Geotrichum*, *Epicoccum*, or *Sporotrichum*.

13. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 12 wherein the mould organism is *P. candidum* or *P. roqueforti*.

14. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the flavour concentrate further comprises a flavour-enhancing bacterium, selected from cultures producing lactic acid, propionic acid or butyric acid.

15. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the percentage of flavour concentrate relative to the total coagulated cheese mass is in the range 0.1% to 20%.

16–17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the fat source is cream, butter or edible oil.

19. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 wherein the heating step is carried out by heating to at least 60°C for between 1 second and 120 minutes.

20. – 21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 19 wherein the mixture is heated to between 70°C and 90°C.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 1 where following the heating step, the cheese precursor is stored at a temperature between 5°C and 35°C and a relative humidity greater than 80%.

25. – 30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the cheese or cheese precursor is divided into portions.

32. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the cheese is subjected to freezing.

33. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein following the freezing step, the cheese is thawed and further ripening occurs.

34. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the precursor cheese or the cheese is shredded or particulated.

35. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the protein concentrate is selected from a milk protein concentrate, a rennetted milk or a reconstituted milk protein concentrate.

36. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the flavour concentrate comprises at least one edible mould.

37. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 36 wherein the mould organism is selected from the family of *Penicillium*, *Mucor*, *Cladosporium*, *Geotrichum*, *Epicoccum*, or *Sporotrichum*.

38. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 37 wherein the mould organism is *P. candidum* or *P. roqueforti*.

39. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the flavour concentrate further comprises a flavour-enhancing bacterium, selected from cultures producing lactic acid, propionic acid or butyric acid.

40. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the percentage of flavour concentrate relative to the total coagulated cheese mass is in the range 0.1% to 20%.

41. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the fat source is cream, butter or edible oil.

42. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 wherein the heating step is carried out by heating to at least 60°C for between 1 second and 120 minutes.

43. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 42 wherein the mixture is heated to between 70°C and 90°C.

44. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 2 where following the heating step, the cheese precursor is stored at a temperature between 5°C and 35°C and a relative humidity greater than 80%.

45. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the cheese or cheese precursor is divided into portions.

46. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the cheese is subjected to freezing.
47. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 46 wherein following the freezing step, the cheese is thawed and further ripening occurs.
48. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 further comprising applying viable organisms to the exposed surface and allowing the cheese to ripen.
49. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the precursor cheese or the cheese is shredded or particulated.
50. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the protein concentrate is selected from a milk protein concentrate, a renneted milk or a reconstituted milk protein concentrate.
51. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the flavour concentrate comprises at least one edible mould.
52. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 51 wherein the mould organism is selected from the family of *Penicillium*, *Mucor*, *Cladosporium*, *Geotrichum*, *Epicoccum*, or *Sporotrichum*.
53. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 52 wherein the mould organism is *P. candidum* or *P. roqueforti*.
54. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the flavour concentrate further comprises a flavour-enhancing bacterium, selected from cultures producing lactic acid, propionic acid or butyric acid.
55. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the percentage of flavour concentrate relative to the total coagulated cheese mass is in the range 0.1% to 20%.
56. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the fat source is cream, butter or edible oil.
57. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 wherein the heating step is carried out by heating to at least 60°C for between 1 second and 120 minutes.
58. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 57 wherein the mixture is heated to between 70°C and 90°C.

59. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 3 where following the heating step, the cheese precursor is stored at a temperature between 5°C and 35°C and a relative humidity greater than 80%.
60. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the cheese is subjected to freezing.
61. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 60 wherein following the freezing step, the cheese is thawed and further ripening occurs.
62. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 further comprising applying viable organisms to the exposed surface, and allowing the cheese to ripen.
63. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the precursor cheese or the cheese is shredded or particulated.
64. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the protein concentrate is selected from a milk protein concentrate, a renneted milk or a reconstituted milk protein concentrate.
65. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the flavour concentrate comprises at least one edible mould.
66. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 65 wherein the mould organism is selected from the family of *Penicillium*, *Mucor*, *Cladosporium*, *Geotrichum*, *Epicoccum*, or *Sporotrichum*.
67. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 66 wherein the mould organism is *P. candidum* or *P. roqueforti*.
68. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the flavour concentrate further comprises a flavour-enhancing bacterium, selected from cultures producing lactic acid, propionic acid or butyric acid.
69. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the percentage of flavour concentrate relative to the total coagulated cheese mass is in the range 0.1% to 20%.
70. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the fat source is cream, butter or edible oil.

71. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 wherein the heating step is carried out by heating to at least 60°C for between 1 second and 120 minutes.

72. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 71 wherein the mixture is heated to between 70°C and 90°C.

73. (Previously Presented) A process as claimed in claim 4 where following the heating step, the cheese precursor is stored at a temperature between 5°C and 35°C and a relative humidity greater than 80%.

74. (New) The process of claim 3, wherein the flavor concentrate is added before step (b).

75. (New) The process of claim 3, wherein the cheese precursor is divided into consumer portions after cooling in step (c).

76. (New) The process of claim 1, further comprising mixing the protein concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid after step (b).

77. (New) The process of claim 2, further comprising mixing the protein concentrate and flavour concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid after step (b).

78. (New) The process of claim 3, further comprising mixing the protein concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid after step (a).

79. (New) The process of claim 4, further comprising mixing the protein concentrate and flavour concentrate with a source of fat and/or liquid after step (b).